

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE OF CT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dear members of the Connecticut Human Services Committee:

Good afternoon, my name is Yojana Arreaga and I am 23 years old. I am representing my group Hartford Deportation Defense. I am in favor of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS because this is an important step forward in getting health insurance for our entire immigrant community.

I am from Guatemala and came to the United States in 2016. I started working full-time but I started to feel very tired. I thought I was weak because I could not work many hours in a row like others.

In 2019 I got pregnant and my symptoms got worse. Now I was out of breath and had to go to the ER. To pay for that bill I had to apply for financial aid and I was approved because of my baby. Because of the risky pregnancy, I was given 6 months of health insurance. There I was able to have tests done and was referred to a cardiologist who found that my heart valve does not open and close properly, caused years ago by a badly cured infection in my country. My heart was damaged. Then I realized that it was not because I was lazy or weak that I could not work like others, but because my heart was damaged.

When my son was born, I lost my health insurance but my condition did not improve. I was only prescribed pills to prevent clotting and prevent infections. I pay for the pills and because of the pandemic I don't even go to the clinic for a checkup anymore. There I paid by showing my paycheck.

Members of the committee, we ask you to support the bill S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. I am giving my testimony in the hope that the health system will be accessible to all. So that we can work with peace of mind and have a healthy community, without having to worry about what will happen if we get sick and we don't have a way to get well. I am afraid of not being helped in time and leaving my 3 year old son alone.